

## Foreign Fowl Found in Duxbury

By MORAG MACLACHLAN

An unexpected foreign feathered friend flew into town last week.

Animal Control Officer Eddy Ramos said a resident on Franklin Street noticed a black swan swimming in a pond off of Congress Street. Ramos said seeing a black swan in the United States, let alone Duxbury, is an anomaly since the birds are usually only found in Australia.

"This is the first black swan I've encountered. They are slowly being introduced to New Zealand and New Guinea, but they are native to Australia," Ramos said. "They are only allowed in this country if a person or a zoo applies for a permit to have one here."

Christen Fotta of Franklin Street was the person who contacted Ramos. She noticed the swan on Saturday, July 15.

"It was absolutely beautiful," Fotta said. "It stayed offshore and would stare at the house. We would throw it bread."

Fotta contacted Mass. Audubon and then Ramos. Ramos said no permits for a black swan were found in the area, which leads him to think the bird was in the region illegally. The bird was spotted two weeks ago in Middleboro and although he has a good idea how the swan made its way to Duxbury, Ramos opted not to divulge this information. He said since the birds can fly, most swan owners have the bird's wings clipped. However, this swan's wings

were not clipped, making rescuing it a little tricky.

Ramos attempted to catch the bird last Monday, July 17; however, he was unsuccessful and returned the next day.

"I sat there with it for a couple of hours so that it would get used to me," Ramos said.

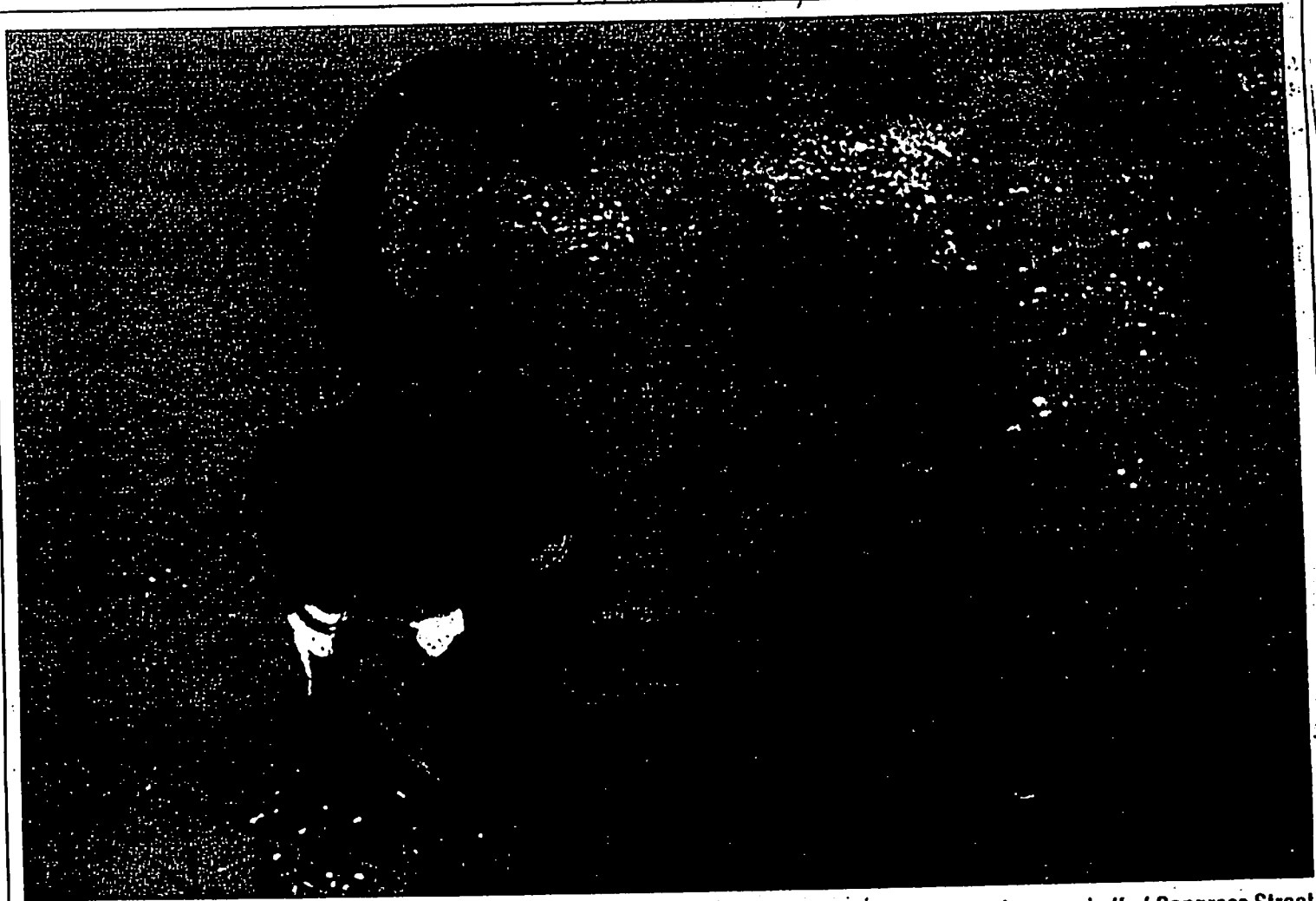
Ramos' sit-in was successful as he caught the swan, bringing it to safety. Ramos said had the swan been left in the pond much longer, the mute swans, which inhabit the pond, would have killed it.

"Swans don't like other swans in their area," Ramos said. "In fact, swans kill their own babies if they don't leave the nest within a certain amount of time. And this swan is used to being fed and doesn't know how to fight."

Ramos said the next challenge he faced was locating a zoo with a permit for taking black swans to evaluate the one-year-old he rescued. He contacted the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and then got in touch with the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston. The swan was transported there where Ramos said the zoo has it quarantined and will run tests on it to determine its gender. He added that the Franklin Park Zoo already has two male black swans.

Melissa Grossenbacher in the office of public relations at the zoo said on Monday that the swan is a male and is still being cared for by the zoo.

ANIMALS, A-Z



**A LONG WAY FROM HOME:** Animal Control Officer Eddy Ramos took this picture of a black swan in a pond off of Congress Street last week. The swan, a native of Australia, is at the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston undergoing testing. See story page 5.